

Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Site Selection for the Expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve Document No. DOE/EIS-0385

Responsible Federal Agency: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Petroleum Reserves

Location: Potential new SPR storage sites are located in Lafourche Parish, Louisiana; Perry and Claiborne Counties, Mississippi; and Brazoria County, Texas. Existing Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) storage sites that could be expanded are located in Cameron, Calcasieu, and Iberville Parishes, Louisiana; and Jefferson County, Texas. Associated pipelines, marine terminals, and other facilities that might be developed are located in East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, St. James, Terrebonne, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana Parishes, Louisiana; Adams, Amite, Forrest, George, Greene, Hinds, Jackson, Jefferson, Lamar, Lincoln, Marion, Pike, Warren, Walthall, and Wilkinson Counties, Mississippi; and Galveston County, Texas.

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Abstract: As required by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-58), DOE would expand the SPR to its full authorized 1 billion-barrel capacity by selecting additional storage sites. DOE would develop one new site or a combination of two new sites, and would expand capacity at two or three existing sites. Storage capacity would be developed by solution mining of salt domes and disposing of the resulting salt brine by ocean discharge or underground injection. New pipelines, marine terminal facilities, and other infrastructure could also be required.

DOE has determined that site selection and expansion constitute a major Federal action within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 USC 4321-4347). The *Federal Register* "Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Conduct Public Scoping Meetings; Site Selection for the Expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve" was published on September 1, 2005 (70 FR 52088). See also the subsequent notices to extend the public scoping period and reschedule public meetings (70 FR 56649, September 28, 2005 and 70 FR 70600, November 22, 2005). DOE held public scoping meetings on October 11, 2005, in Lake Jackson, Texas; on October 17, 2005, in Jackson, Mississippi; on October 18, 2005, in Houma, Louisiana; and on December 7, 2005, in Port Gibson, Mississippi. DOE also solicited written comments on the scope of the EIS in the Notice of Intent.

DOE has prepared this draft EIS to address the environmental impacts of the proposed expansion of the capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and the range of reasonable alternatives, including the "No Action" alternative, under which SPR storage capacity would not be expanded. DOE will use the draft EIS to ensure that it has the information needed for purposes of informed decision-making. DOE's decisions will be issued subsequent to the Final EIS, in the form of a Record of Decision, no sooner than 30 days after publication of the Notice of Availability of the final EIS.

Public Comments: Locations and times of public hearings on this draft EIS will be announced in the *Federal Register* on May 26, 2006. Comments on this Draft EIS will be accepted for a period of 45 days following its issuance and will be considered in the preparation of the final EIS. Any comments received later will be considered to the extent practicable.

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